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June 30, 1992

Foreign Minister Joao de Deus Pinheiro
European Community Presidency
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon, Portugal
by fax: 351-1-605927

Dear Minister de Deus Pinheiro:

As Portugal's Presidency of the European Community draws to a close, we would like to express our deep dismay with the lack of a statement on East Timor from the European Summit.

Like many other people in East Timor and around the globe, we had hoped that the coincidence of Portugal's Presidency and the renewed public awareness of East Timor following last November's Santa Cruz massacre would be an opportunity for the European Community to express itself strongly in support of human rights and self-determination for the people of that troubled half-island.

In Washington, historically one of the least advanced capitals on this question, the U.S. House of Representatives voted unanimously last week to cancel U.S.-supplied military training for the Indonesian armed forces. A pending bill would suspend all military and economic aid (except humanitarian aid), arms sales, and trade preferences for Indonesia until the East Timorese have human rights and are allowed to hold a U.N.-supervised referendum to determine their political future. A new initiative, jointly undertaken by U.S. and Japanese parliamentarians, urges the Secretary-General to establish a U.N. presence in East Timor, begin negotiations, and take steps to implement General Assembly and Security Council resolutions for self-determination.

On this side of the Atlantic, there is finally some activity that could end the seventeen-year nightmare of the East Timorese people. We are disappointed that concern on that side appears to be waning.

We hope that the EC's lack of action does not represent a trend. While we appreciate Portugal's advocacy on behalf of the Timorese people, we feel that the lost opportunity of the European Summit will require all the more effort here and at the Consultative Group on Indonesia meeting in Paris to make sure that the reawakened global consciousness about East Timor does not dissipate, that the Timorese people do not have to endure another 17 years of genocide.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,

Charles Scheiner, coordinator
East Timor Action Network, United States